AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-18. (canceled)

19. (new)   A method of operating a communications system in which a first user can elect to send an audio-visual communication directly to a mailbox of a second user, the method comprising the steps of:

(a)   maintaining a store associated with the second user, the store comprising entries indicating a plurality of other users who are allowed or not allowed to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user;

(b)   upon sending of a communication from the second user to any destination user, automatedly performing a store modification procedure with respect to the entry associated with the destination user;

(c)   upon receiving a request from the first user desiring to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user:

checking the store to determine whether the first user is a user who has previously received a communication from said second user to determine if the first user is allowed to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user; and accordingly allowing or not allowing the communication to the mailbox.

20. (new)   A method according to claim 19, in which the store modification procedure comprises adding into the store an entry associated with the destination user.

21. (new)   A method according to claim 19, in which the step in (b) of sending a communication from the second user to any destination user comprises associating with the communication a signal caused by the second user, the signal indicating whether or not the destination user is allowed to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user.

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22. (new) A method according to claim 19, in which the store modification procedure comprises:

detecting a signal associated with the communication that indicates whether the destination user is to be allowed to send audio-visual communications directly to the mailbox; and

performing subsequent steps in the store modification procedure on the basis of that signal.

23. (new) A method according to claim 21, in which the signal comprises an inhibition signal which indicates that the second user does not want the destination user to be allowed to send audio-visual communications directly to the mailbox; and the subsequent steps in the store modification procedure comprises inhibiting any amendment of the store.

24. (new) A method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of using a web application to remotely access and modify the store.

25. (new) A communications system in which a first user can elect to send an audio-visual communication directly to a mailbox of a second user, the system comprising:

(a) a store associated with the second user, the store comprising entries indicating a plurality of other users who are allowed or not allowed to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user;

(b) a device associated with the second user, the device being arranged to send a communication from the second user to any destination user, and upon such sending the device being further arranged to automatedly perform a store modification procedure with respect to the entry associated with the destination user; and

(c) the system being arranged, upon receiving a request from the first user desiring to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user, to check the store to determine whether the first user is allowed to send an audio-

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visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user; and the system accordingly allowing or not allowing the communication to the mailbox.

26. (new)   A system according to claim 25, in which the store modification procedure comprises adding into the store an entry associated with the destination user.

27. (new)   A system according to claim 25, in which the device in (b) is arranged, when sending a communication from the second user to any destination, to associate with the communication a signal caused by the second user, the signal indicating whether or not the destination user is allowed to send an audio-visual communication directly to the mailbox of the second user.

28. (new)   A system according to claim 25, in which the store modification procedure comprises:

detecting a signal associated with the communication that indicates whether the destination user is to be allowed to send audio-visual communications directly to the mailbox; and

performing subsequent steps in the store modification procedure on the basis of that signal.

29. (new)   A system according to claim 27, in which the signal comprises an inhibition signal which indicates that the second user does not want the destination user to be allowed to send audio-visual communications directly to the mailbox; and the subsequent steps in the store modification procedure comprises inhibiting any amendment of the store.

30. (new)   A system according to claim 25, further comprising a web application arranged to allow a user to remotely access and modify the store.

31. (new)   A storage medium carrying computer readable code representing instructions for causing at least one processor to perform the method according to claim 19 when the instructions are executed by the at least one processor.

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32. (new)　　A method of controlling the access a calling party has to the communications message store of a called party, the method comprising the following steps:

determining the identity of the calling party;

determining from one or more stored records of identities associated with the communications store, if the identity of the calling party is an identity entitled to have direct access to the communications message store, wherein each of said one or more stored records is associated automatically with the identity of a party previously called by the called party; and

if the identity of the calling party is not associated in any one of said stored records, preventing the calling party from storing a communications message in said communications message store.

33. (new)　　A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein said communications message store is a multi-media communications mail-box.

34. (new)　　A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein each stored record contains information identifying the party previously called by the called party which was captured automatically while on-ward connecting a call from the called party to the party.